



STAFF REPORT

DATE: APRIL 13, 2022

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: PROPOSED SOUTH FAIR OAKS SPECIFIC PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

1. **Recommend** that the City Council consider an Addendum to the 2015 Pasadena General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), along with the EIR, and find that the Addendum properly discloses only minor technical changes or additions to the EIR, and none of the conditions triggering a subsequent or supplemental EIR are present, as set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15164; and
2. **Recommend** that the City Council make the Findings for Approval for the General Plan Map Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment, and Zoning Code Map and Text Amendments and approve the proposed South Fair Oaks Specific Plan.

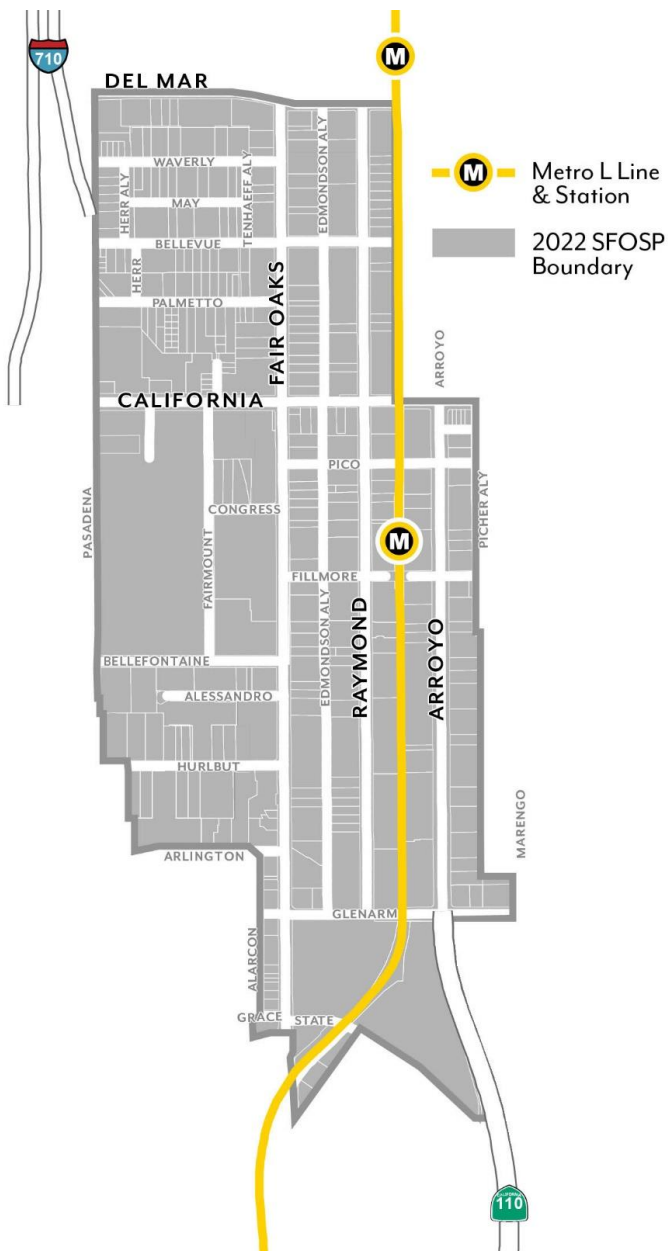
BACKGROUND:

On October 27, 2021, the Planning Commission held a study session on the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan. City staff presented information on potential revisions to the plan boundary, vision, objectives, subarea concepts, land uses, standards and guidelines that would regulate future development in the plan area. The Planning Commission discussed and received public comments on the potential changes to the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan. City staff has prepared a proposed plan which considers a variety of factors, including feedback from Planning Commission and the community. Refer to Attachment A for the proposed plan. The 1998 South Fair Oaks Specific Plan is also included as Attachment B. For a summary of the community engagement process and public and Commission feedback refer to Attachment C.

PROPOSED SOUTH FAIR OAKS SPECIFIC PLAN:

The proposed plan encompasses the area between Del Mar Boulevard to the north, the Metro L Line (Gold) right-of-way and Picher Alley to the east, State Street and the SR-110 Arroyo Parkway to the south, and Pasadena Avenue to the west (See Map 1). As proposed, the plan boundaries align with the overall vision, goals, and policies for the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan area as approved and depicted in the General Plan Land Use diagram, with the exception of the removal of two public schools at the southern boundary (Pasadena Unified School District).

Map 1. Proposed Plan Boundary for the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan



Staff considered refining the plan boundaries to include the area along Arroyo Parkway, north of California Boulevard, as commented by the Commission. The proposed plan maintains the approved boundary. California Boulevard serves as a transition for Arroyo Parkway, with the northern segment having a land use designation of High and Medium Mixed Use and part of the Central District Specific Plan. The southern segment transitions into a lower scale corridor with land use designation of primarily Medium Commercial with an emphasis on commercial uses. Maintaining the proposed boundary would not preclude appropriate transitions between plan areas when considering individual plans.

The South Fair Oaks Specific Plan area is envisioned as a creative, innovative, and health-oriented mixed-use community that provides multi-family housing, neighborhood-serving amenities, medical services, educational, and employment opportunities accessible to transit for residents, employees, students, and faculty. The objective of updating this plan is to establish new regulations, standards, and guidelines that would implement the plan vision. For more information on the plan vision, goals, and policies, which is a new chapter presented, refer to Chapter 3 of the proposed plan.

Proposed Regulations and Standards

An overview of the regulations and standards is discussed below. For a comparison of the current and the proposed regulations and standards, refer to Attachment D.

Land Uses (Chapter 4 of the proposed plan)

The proposed plan intends to balance a variety of medical, office, retail, and restaurant uses that support the City's creative and economic vitality while providing new housing opportunities with convenient access to transit and major institutions such as the Art Center and Huntington Memorial Hospital. The most significant land use shift compared to the existing plan is the introduction of residential uses along Raymond Avenue and portions of Fair Oaks Avenue and Arroyo Parkway Boulevard. Residential uses will continue to be permitted along Del Mar Boulevard, as well as work/live units throughout most of the northwest area of the plan to address feedback received from Planning Commission. The area north of Bellefontaine Street, west of Fair Oaks Avenue, most of Arroyo Parkway Boulevard, and the area south of Glenarm Street will focus on nonresidential land uses. The intent within these areas is to encourage an eclectic mix of commercial and research and development uses that support existing businesses and promote economic vitality for the City, as well as provide neighborhood amenities and services for the surrounding community. Lastly, the area south of Hurlbut Street, west of Fair Oaks Avenue, will remain as a multi-family residential neighborhood. For a complete list of allowable land uses refer to Chapter 4.3 of the proposed plan document.

Density and Building Height (Chapter 6 of the proposed plan)

The standards in the proposed plan seek to facilitate and encourage development, particularly new housing, near the Fillmore and Del Mar Stations, focusing growth and higher density development away from residential neighborhoods and into areas that are transit-accessible and closer to jobs and amenities. The greatest building heights are proposed adjacent to the Fillmore and Del Mar Stations, with heights tapering down along Raymond Avenue. Heights are lower along Arroyo Parkway Boulevard in order to provide appropriate transitions to adjacent multi-family residential properties to the east, with lower heights within the multi-family residential neighborhood in the southwest portion of the plan area.

Sidewalk, Building Setback, and Street Trees (Chapters 5 and 6 of the proposed plan)

The proposed plan includes public realm standards and guidelines to support pedestrian mobility and amenities within the sidewalk that are appropriate and relative to adjacent land uses. Existing sidewalk widths range between 8 to 12 feet along Fair Oaks Avenue; 10 feet along Raymond Avenue and Arroyo Parkway Boulevard; 8 to 12 along Del Mar Boulevard; 10 feet along California Boulevard; and 8 feet along Glenarm Street. The proposed plan will introduce a new development standard for minimum sidewalk widths ranging from 12 to 25 feet, with the widest sidewalks required along access routes to the Fillmore Station.

In addition to the newly required minimum sidewalk widths, setback requirements ranging from 0 to 15 feet for up to 75% of building frontages will be required. The majority of the corridors allow a 0-foot setback today, however Raymond Avenue, portions of Fair Oaks Avenue, and the majority of Arroyo Parkway Boulevard will require a minimum 5-foot setback.

The combination of minimum sidewalk widths, building setbacks, and other standards, such as minimum parkways, not only serves to reduce the appearance of building mass, but also creates greater opportunities for increasing the street tree canopy and stormwater capture throughout the plan area. Furthermore, standardizing minimum street tree well dimensions and requiring an uncompacted root zone for all new street trees contribute to an enhanced shade canopy that helps to reduce the urban heat island effect, decrease sidewalk temperatures, enhances pedestrian comfort, and improve visual appearance of the street. The proposed plan also includes design guidance for tree selection which builds on the City’s Master Street Tree Plan, refer to Appendix A.2.

Open Space and Paseos (Chapter 6 of the proposed plan)

The proposed plan revises open space requirements to improve quality of life and open space access for residents, businesses, students, and visitors. Private and common open space requirements for residential development would be based on the number of bedrooms in each proposed unit, ensuring adequate open space amenities for the number of residents within each building. Common open space is also required for commercial projects, creating amenities for visitors and employees. In addition to the benefit of providing open space for building users, the requirements also contribute to better building modulation and massing with patios, balconies, terraces, and plazas. The proposed plan also includes a new requirement for Publicly Accessible Open Space (“PAOS”), including paseos, for larger projects near the Fillmore Station to achieve an overarching goal of improving access and visibility to the station from Huntington Memorial Hospital, Art Center, and Arroyo Parkway Boulevard that would promote physical activity and wellness. The proposed plan requires the planting of trees for common open space and PAOS, including paseos. The number of trees required is a function of the size of the space. The proposed plan would include a requirement that would indicate that trees planted in pots, or other similar containers, would not count towards meeting the requirement for the minimum number of trees needed for a project.

Parking (Chapter 6 of the proposed plan)

The proposed plan refines parking requirements for commercial uses by setting a consistent minimum parking requirement of 2 spaces per 1,000 square feet for office, retail, restaurant, and service uses. Also, no additional parking will be required for these uses occupying less than 5,000 square feet as well as for outdoor dining spaces less than 500 square feet. Projects

within designated historic resources and changes of use in structures built prior to 1970 will also not be required to provide additional parking. This allows for greater flexibility for changes in use, particularly when a new restaurant seeks to occupy an existing tenant space that was previously used for retail or office, and encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings. The reduced parking requirements also reflect the area's access to high quality transit, including the Fillmore and Del Mar Stations, both of which are walkable within a quarter- and half-mile radius, covering the majority of the plan area.

Implementation (Chapter 7 of the proposed plan)

The proposed plan will be primarily implemented through the adoption of the plan's new land use, public realm, development regulations, and guidelines which align private sector investment with the plan's vision, goals, and policies. For instance, the proposed plan includes design guidelines for medical office buildings that are intended to be utilized by developers to help elevate the design of new projects. In addition, the proposed plan includes targeted actions for the City that are intended to help guide and prioritize implementation of the plan. These actions reflect feedback received throughout the outreach process and includes programs such as work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to identify opportunities for safety and mobility improvements consistent with the Complete Streets Program and the Pedestrian Plan and Planning staff overseeing a citywide historic survey to identify new historic resources in the area.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

An Initial Study and EIR was prepared for the Pasadena General Plan in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and certified by the City Council on August 17, 2015. An addendum to the EIR has been prepared analyzing the update to the SFOSP in compliance with Section 15164 (Addendum to an EIR or Negative Declaration) of the CEQA guidelines (Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 11). The addendum found that the project revisions will not result in any potentially significant impacts that were not already analyzed in the EIR, and none of the conditions triggering a subsequent or supplemental EIR are present, as set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15164. Refer to Attachment E for the Addendum to the General Plan EIR. For information on the 2015 General Environmental Impact Report refer to Attachment F.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed plan for the South Fair Oaks area would replace the current 1998 specific plan, refining the plan boundaries, vision, goals, policies, regulations, standards, guidelines, and implementation actions for this specific area. As proposed, this plan seeks to facilitate and encourage development and improvements to realize the vision for the plan area, factoring in community, stakeholder, and commission input throughout the outreach process.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments: (8)

- Attachment A – Recommended South Fair Oaks Specific Plan
- Attachment B – Existing 1998 South Fair Oaks Specific Plan
- Attachment C – Community Engagement Process and Public Feedback
- Attachment D – Comparison Table of Current and Proposed Development Standards
- Attachment E – Addendum to the General Plan Environmental Impact Report
- Attachment F – 2015 General Plan Environmental Impact Report
- Attachment G – Recommended General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments
- Attachment H – Required Findings for General Plan, Specific Plan, and Zoning Code

Available at the following link: <https://www.ourpasadena.org/SFOSP-PC-HR-041322>.